

*The Academy*  
*Policies and Procedures*  
*Handbook*

*2806-A Fox Meadow Lane*

*Jonesboro, AR 72404*

*870-932-0484*

**The Academy** is a division of The Learning Center of Northeast Arkansas, Inc. The Academy was created due to the need for an alternative educational environment for children with Autism. Many of the children diagnosed with Autism at TLC receive intense ABA therapy. In a traditional school setting, this type of therapy is either not provided or to a much lower degree than the child is getting currently. Many parents want to continue this type of therapy and The Academy will be able to provide that service for the child as well as their educational services. The Academy has a certified special education teacher who will be providing educational services as well as developing and implementing each child's Individualized Education Plan. Each child's plan will include a ABA therapy plan that will be developed and implemented by a BCBA and RBTs. The Academy will start the first year with kindergarten only students and will add additional grades each year thereafter.

### **History of The Learning Center**

The Learning Center (TLC) is a 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to providing a variety of therapeutic, medical and educational programs for children with a variety of learning differences in order to promote success academically, socially and in the community. The Learning Center has provided services to families of individuals with disabilities since 1959.

At that time, however, there were two separate programs being operated: The Cottage of Hope and the Dr. John T. Gray Memorial School. In 1990, these two consolidated and formed what is presently known as The Learning Center. Currently, The Learning Center provides facilities and services for children with disabilities from birth to five years of age on two campuses in Jonesboro. Home-based and community intervention services are also provided in Northeast Arkansas. Physical, occupational and speech therapy are critical components of the services system as well as a variety of other support programs.

The Learning Center also provides adult development services for adults with disabilities. The Administrative offices are located at 2808 Fox Meadow Lane in Jonesboro.



The Learning Center receives funds from Arkansas Developmental Disabilities Services, the Department of Human Services, United Way of Northeast Arkansas, Ag for Autism, Simmons Bank Foundation, First Horizons Foundation and UCP. Donations from individuals, civic groups and other organizations are also welcomed.

The Learning Center is always pleased to provide appropriate acknowledgments for all memorial gifts. These funds permit us to continually upgrade our program and more effectively meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of The Academy is to provide research based therapy, education and interventions for children with Autism to help them develop life-sustaining skills to live a productive life.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Academy will utilize the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) are used to promote student conduct that is respectful, tolerant, and compassionate. These behaviors are encouraged within an engaging and nurturing learning environment.

1. We practice appropriate behaviors.  
Students learn and practice concepts that are often taught as abstractions such as dignity, respect, compassion, kindness and tolerance. These concepts are taught as concrete behaviors the student can model.
2. We recognize needs and differences.  
Students participate in both group and individualized social skill instruction to learn to recognize and value individual needs and differences.
3. We embrace opportunities to make choices.  
Classroom and individualized behavioral supports help students identify and make choices regarding behaviors commonly labeled as “being good or behaving.”
4. We learn in a communal school setting.  
Students and parents adhere to the attendance, dress code, illness, and policies detailed in TLCs Academy parent handbook.

### **Discipline Policy**

Many children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental disabilities, and other learning challenges may exhibit problem behaviors. We utilize the tools of ABA to assess what function a problem behavior serves for the student. We then work to reduce the value of the problem behavior by teaching and increasing a student’s frequency of using a socially appropriate

behavior. To achieve our aim of fostering a safe, engaging, and nurturing environment, we utilize the following:

**1. Individualized instruction**

Each student has individualized learning goals. Some students also have individualized treatment plans. Learning goals and treatment plans are developed and supervised by Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBAs).

**2. Bully-Free Environment**

A bully-free environment is fostered by directly teaching relationship building skills.

**3. Promotion of self-regulation skills**

Procedures focus on teaching students how to cope with environmental triggers and how to use individualized tools to manage their own behavior. A combination of proactively teaching behavior skills and ensuring an enriching learning environment promotes appropriate interactions.

**4. Guided social support**

Conflicts among peers are addressed in real time with guided support from instructors.

**5. Typical classroom-based intervention**

Minor behaviors of concern are handled directly in the classroom environment with opportunities to try again or complete additional work to earn access to preferred activities/materials.

**6. Behavior Intervention Plan**

More significant difficulties (property destruction, harm to self or others) are addressed by utilizing individualized procedures written in a student's behavior intervention plan (BIP), instructors will begin the data collection and consultation process with Behavior Analyst to initiate plan development.

**7. Address safety concerns**

The safety of all students is always a top priority. Students may be removed from the classroom to a private space (or other students may leave the classroom) when a student is engaging in crisis behaviors. A BCBA may be called in to directly supervise and support instructors. A discipline report and a parental phone call or conference occurs following incidents of severe problem behavior.

**8. Disruptive behaviors**

No student may continually engage in disruptive behavior or negative conduct which, a) significantly affect the right to personnel to carry on their function in the school; b) affect the rights of other students to learn in an appropriately controlled educational environment.

**Parent Involvement**

Effective communication between parents, instructors, therapist, and family support members lies at the heart of supporting each student in a holistic, cohesive manner. Parents are expected to be involved in their child's education by committing to the following:

**1. Learn principles of Applied Behavior Analysis**

All parents attend a tour and educational session regarding the principles of ABA.

**2. Effectively communicate**

Parents are encouraged to share goals and keep *The Academy* informed about behavior concerns at home and in the community. Share plans for interventions aimed at addressing behaviors (medications, diet changes or supplements) before beginning so that baseline data can be taken.

**3. Review data**

Carefully review data shared by The Academy ABA program and share parent insight.

**4. Attend family trainings**

Parents are invited to attend optional family training sessions as part of enrollment. Parents who would like in-depth family training may speak with instructors to develop an individualized family training plan.

**5. Attend progress report**

Parents attend student progress report meetings.

**6. Attend mandatory parent meetings**

For students with a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), parent meetings are mandatory.

**7. Consider volunteer opportunities**

Parents may choose to participate in the parent led fundraising, advocacy and event planning team.

**8. Support school events**

Parents are encouraged to attend special school events and programs.

## **Clothing**

Please dress your child in weather-appropriate clothing. Always assume your child will go outside. Unless the weather is excessively hot or cold, children will go outside every day. In cooler weather, please send a jacket, gloves, hat, etc. Please apply sunscreen before bringing your child in the warmer months. At The Academy your child may get dirty, paint, markers, sand, etc. on his/her clothing. Please keep this in mind when selecting your child's clothes. Finally, please send at least one extra pair of labeled clothing to be kept at school in case of accidents, including shirt, pants, underwear and socks.

## **Breakfast and Lunch**

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to students; menus will be sent home on a monthly basis. If your child has specific allergies or will not eat a specific meal, please consider sending them a lunch or snacks.

## **Attendance Policy**

Daily attendance is expected of all students because it is an integral to the learning process. Parents should notify the school prior to 8:00 am to report any absences. Doctors notes should be provided when students are ill. Students who miss excessively (more than 10 days per semester) may be dismissed from the program.

### **Accidents**

Accidents occasionally occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. Any personal injury incident must be reported to a staff member. An accident report will be completed and filed with the administration. In the case of personal injury to a student or guest, the staff will act immediately to ensure that person's safety. If necessary, emergency medical treatment will be provided. Parent/legal guardians must complete the Emergency Medical Release Form.

### **Drop off and Pick up**

The school day begins at 8:00 am, students can be dropped off between 7:30 and 8:00. A staff member will be there to monitor students before school begins at 8:00 am. School will be dismissed at 3:00 pm. After school care is provided from 3:30-5:30 with an additional fee.

### **Emergency Closings**

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, The Academy will determine closings when the safety of students, teachers and staff are in question. Parents/guardians will be notified promptly of any school closings. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to update changes to contact information. Text messages will be sent to notify parents of closings.

## **Academic Curriculum**

### **Literacy Curriculum**

CONNECTIONS: OG IN 3D® SCIENCE-BASED READING

SUMMARY: Connections: OG in3D® is a structured literacy curriculum that systematically teaches the entire structure of the English language. Each lesson provides direct, explicit instruction in the five components of reading, as outlined in the National Reading Panel Report (2000).

Lessons are cumulative and follow a logical order. The scope and sequence presents the alphabetic principle in order of frequency of use, from simplest to most complex. Concepts are taught from concrete to abstract, through hands-on lessons with 3D materials included in the Connections training. Students can "hold" and manipulate a sound in their hands. 5 levels of phonemic awareness, 26 letters, 44 sounds, and 166+ ways to spell those sounds are taught using multisensory techniques and manipulatives. Students learn syllable-spelling conventions to determine vowel pronunciation.

Connections teaches students to attend to sound, spelling, meaning, and etymology. In addition to phoneme-grapheme correspondence and orthographic mapping, students become aware that our language is morphophonemic, as layers of etymology and morphology are added.

Application of sound to symbol knowledge, spelling rules and patterns, grammar, comprehension, and fluency are practiced using nonsense words, real words, phrases, sentences, and connected text. 100% decodable personalized readers provide decoding practice. Vocabulary (including multiple meanings and figures of speech) is learned by developing semantic networks of ideas and relationships.

To insure automaticity, frequent distributive practice and checkpoints for mastery are built into each lesson. When decoding becomes automatic, students are able to use their cognitive energy for higher level comprehension. Students learn syntax and semantics using material they are actually able to decode.

Connections training is comprehensive and provides ongoing support. Participants will be well-versed in the science of effective reading instruction, theoretical models of reading, brain research, and how each part of the Connections lessons addresses all components of reading instruction.

## **Math Curriculum**

### **TouchMath**

#### **TouchMath Numerals with TouchPoints™**

Every numeral from one through nine has TouchPoints™ corresponding to the digit's value. Numerals one through five have single TouchPoints.™ Numerals six through nine have double TouchPoints.™ Students count aloud as they touch the single TouchPoints™ once and double TouchPoints™ twice. The numeral zero has no TouchPoints™ and is never touched or counted. This concrete approach engages students on auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic levels.

TouchMath® was initially developed in 1975 by Janet Bullock. She found that many students were struggling with math concepts and needed an intervention that would increase their math skills as well as their confidence in the subject. The TouchMath® program is firmly established in the works of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner. (Bullock, 2009) The learning concept of moving through a framework of concept stages: Concrete, pictorial, and symbolic was the early basis of the TouchMath® program. TouchMath® aids in students' procedural fluency, one-to-one correspondence, stable order, cardinality, abstraction, order irrelevance, and conceptual development. TouchMath® is a researched based program. The below graph contains TouchMath® research that was completed over the past twenty-five years and proves the effectiveness of the TouchMath® program.

**Handwriting Without Tears®** curriculum draws from years of innovation and research to provide developmentally appropriate, multisensory strategies for early writing. The program follows research of how children learn best and includes materials that address all styles of learning. Multisensory activities and manipulatives appeal to all learning styles and provide a hands-on approach to handwriting. Teach handwriting alongside other subjects! Fun letter lessons and writing activities connect handwriting to math, social studies, ELA, and science. Innovative letter order and style are developmentally appropriate and promote easy learning for every letter—print and cursive.

**Kindermusik** is a valuable addition to any preschool, pre-K, or early elementary curriculum. Our program uses music-and-movement activities to build listening skills, receptive and expressive language skills, and social-emotional skills such as turn-taking and self-control. It is based on decades of research and experience developing award-winning early childhood materials and curricula. Kindermusik aligns with many widely-accepted standards for high-quality early childhood education, including the Common Core State Standards as well as numerous state early-learning guidelines.

Community involvement such as trips to the Public Library and Miracle League Park will be an integral part of the curriculum. Science, History, & Fine arts will all be based on the Arkansas Standards. The school will have a garden center that the children will participate in growing and nurturing plants.

### **Specialized Therapies and Interventions**

Children will be provided with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy daily. This will be guided by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). Each student's plan will be developed based on a semi-annual evaluation conducted by the BCBA to determine appropriate goals and progress.

Children will also be provided with speech therapy and occupational therapy as prescribed by their evaluations. Physical Therapy will also be provided to those who qualify.

### **Financial Policies and Procedures**

Fees:

\$5000 annual tuition- tuition includes lunches  
\$500 supply and materials fee

Payment options:

Plan A: First payment due August 15- \$2500  
Second payment due January 15- \$2500

Plan B: monthly payments (\$500 a month-payments are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month- Aug. 15 through May 15)

All therapies will be billed to Medicaid, Tefra, or private insurance- (we currently accept BCBS of Arkansas, Cigna, Tricare).

Parents may be responsible for cost of therapies if funding is lost or services are denied. All possible avenues to get therapies paid will be accessed before seeking parents to pay for therapies.



### **Receipt of Policies and Procedures Handbook**

**The parent/guardians on behalf of themselves and students accept all the conditions set forth in the current Policies and Procedures Handbook and agree to comply with all school regulations by their signatures on the verification document indicating that they have read and understand the handbook.**

**The Academy reserves the right to review and update the handbook as it sees fit. TLC Board of Directors in collaboration with The Academy administration, has the right to amend or revise any policy in the handbook. The parent/guardians will be given prompt notification in writing if changes are made.**

I have received a copy of the parent handbook addressing policies and procedures for The Academy.

---

Student Name

---

---

Parent signature

Date

## Emergency Medical Consent Form

The Academy has my permission to obtain emergency medical treatment for my child \_\_\_\_\_ when I cannot be reached or if a delay in reaching my child would be dangerous for him/her.

**Mother/Guardian's name** \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Father/Guardian's name** \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

My insurance provider is: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_ Group #: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred hospital/treatment center: \_\_\_\_\_

My child is taking the following prescriptions:

\_\_\_\_\_

My child has the following allergies:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I understand that I assume all financial responsibility for any treatment or injuries sustained by my child while he/she is in child care.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date